DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 280 769 SO 018 018

AUTHOR Parsons, Jim
TITLE The Nature and Implication of Textbook Bias.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 35p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS American Indians; Cultural Images; Elementary Secondary Education; Eskimos; *Ethnic Bias; Ethnic Discrimination; *Ethnic Stereotypes; Indigenous Populations; *Minority Groups; North Americans; *Racial Bias; Social Studies; *Textbook Bias; Textbooks
IDENTIFIERS *Native Americans

ABSTRACT

Savage, blood-thirsty, drunk, monosyllabic, naked, and primitive are the stereotypes of Native Americans in textbooks. These stereotypes are so pervasive that they tend to be accepted uncritically by the rest of society. The evidence suggests that many textbooks are biased and, in a large number of cases, outright racist. The concept of "errors by omission" has been noted as important by several educators. Also, many authors who are critical of textbooks state that texts are written from a white Eurocentric perspective. In the pamphlet "Two History Texts: A Study in Contrasts" (1975), Moore states that judging one culture by the standards of another represents its own type of bias. Hence, Indians are named Indians instead of a name of their own choosing; authors report that "funny sounding" place names come from Indians; Indian religions practices are called myths; and the Indians were "discovered" or "found" by Europeans. Critics of biased textbooks feel that, until things change for the better, another generation of school children will learn that some people in society are more valuable than others. In conclusion, the treatment of natives in textbooks and in education generally reflects that the society has low expectations for natives as a group and fails to see them as individuals. (BZ)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED280769

THE NATURE AND IMPLICATION OF TEXTBOOK BIAS

by

Jim Parsons

SO018018

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jim Parsons

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Nature and Implication of Textbook Bias

by Jim Parsons
Department of Secondary Education
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2G5

Savage, blood-thirsty, drunk, monosyllabic, naked, and primitive. These are the sterotypes of Native Americans in textbooks. And, these stereotypes are so pervasive that they tend to be accepted uncritically by the rest of society. Quite simply, many textbooks lie about Indians. And, even more unfortunate, many of us believe these lies. In Teaching Prejudice (1971, p. 51), McDiarmid and Pratt state:

> In general Indians emerged as the least favored of all the groups. An overwhelming number were portrayed as primitive and unskilled; not infrequently they were shown as aggressive and hostile as well. Although most have worn western dress for generations, 95 percent were shown in tribal dress or partly clothed. In 86 percent of the illustrations, one or more Indian males were shown wearing feathers or feathered headresses. Admittedly, many of the texts we examined were history texts dealing with a bygone era, but this would not explain why so few were shown in western dress, why many were shown naked or half naked (the climate and therefore the winter season in Canada has been relatively constant during the years of our written history), and why none were shown in skilled or professional occupations.

LaRoque in her moving personal account of her life as a Native titled Defeathering the Indian (1975, p.50) believes that uncritical acceptance of what history books say about Native Americans "negates two very crucial points." First,

descriptions of Natives were "based upon blatant ethnocentricity." Second, "twentieth-century Western standards are used to access sixteenth-century Indian life." The fact that textbooks stereotype Natives in blatently biased ways and that these biases abuse Natives cannot be disputed. The question remains. "Why has such abuse, particularly from a seemingly "intelligent" and "liberal" educational system, continue?

It is not that there has never been a controversy about textbooks. Controversy surrounding prejudicial social studies texts is neither recent or centered in Alberta. In Not in Our Schools (1982, p. 25) Judith Dick reports that more than twenty-five years ago (1961) Manitoba was the center of similar textbook controversy. Native groups, with limited success, have been critical of the "derogatory and incomplete picture of the Canadian Indian" protrayed in social studies texts.

Textbooks are offensive when they err in either one of two general ways. First, textbooks can present material that is either racist or biased in itself. Second, textbooks can omit material that is important for a complete understanding of the historical event or issue. There are many specific ways in which textbooks can make mistakes.

LaRoque (1975, p. 64) lists six kinds of unfair treatment that can be found in textbooks. These include:

1. Unfairness in the use of language. For example, Indians were "lurking" while cowboys were "scouting." Indians "murdered" while white men "killed." Indians, LaRoque suggests, are written about as if they were contemporary "problems."

2. Unfairness through neglecting to provide up-to-date material. Material in texts might have once been true, but things have changed.

3. Unfairness by deleting significant aspects of Indian history, like the annihilation of the Beothuk tribe. Often, the memory of textbooks is selective.

4. Unfairness in pointing out Indian's faults while extolling the virtues of the writer's group. In any group, it is difficult to get past personal concerns.

5. Unfairness by giving superficial or token treatment to the contributions of Indians to North American culture. These contributions were good, at least for a "primitive" group.

6. Unfairness by printing only one side of the story. Indians control few of the publishing houses in North America.

Native People in the Curriculum (1981) by Decore, et. al. cites a number of specific examples of racism and bias in books once listed as prescribed textbooks for Alberta social studies. Such a finding is particularly disturbing in a curriculum that prides itself on democratic action, like Alberta's Social Studies Curriculum. That resources can be cited for racist reporting of history damaged the intent of the entire curriculum.

But, what is racism? Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks (1979) defines racism as:

> Any attitude, action, or institutional practice which subordiantes people because of their color. [Whether racism is intentional is beside the point. Only the results are important in judging whether an action, an institution, or a society, is racist.] (p. 39)

Educational materials help to maintain racism by:

> maintaining practices and materials which reinforce and perpetuate a racist society. Textbooks are a key factor. Within societies characterized by racial oppression, books tend to project the views, perspectives, and historical interpretations of the dominating racial group. The books thus reflect the prevailing views of superiority and inferiority. They contain, as well, the justifications developed by the dominating race to rationalize its position of privilege. (p. 39)

The Decore Report (1981) was not alone in citing racism in Canadian social studies texts. LaRoque (1975, p. 53) states that a "selective and ethnocentric viewpoint of civilization has filtered into every classroom in North America. Hence, the myth of the Indian both as a warrior and as a savage has persisted right into our century." Kirkness (1977, p. 596) reports that the Survey of Canadian History Textbooks published by the Indian and Metis Conference in 1964 found:

> startling errors of ommission as well as commisssion; the ancient Indian religious beliefs are always contemptuously dismissed; the authors find it necessary to repeatedly point out the lack of cleanliness of the wigwams and the food while more important virtues go ignored; and once we reach the period of Confederation there creeps in that smug paternalism that so undermines Indian pride and imposes on him either lethargy or a destructive resentment. A verse from page 37 of Pages from Canada's Story illustrates the point:

Who calls?
The Red Man, Poor and Sick
He calls.
Who comes?
The White Man, Rich and Strong
He comes.
Who wathces?
To see that Pitty Reigns,
God watches.

It is obvious that the poem above is certainly written from a narrow perspective. Unfortunately, critics have cited that such a narrow perspective dominates many textbooks printed in Canada. But, even if such a narrow perspective dominates the textbooks, does this cause harm? The answer is YES. One of the reasons is that the textbook is the most widely used educational tool.

The National Science Foundation studies titled "The Status of Social Studies Education" (1979) reports that the textbook remains the most basic and widely used educational tool. The Association of American Publishers (1976) state:

Textbooks play an important part in education, transmitting not only facts and figures, but ideas and cultural values. The words and pictures children see in school influence the development of the attitudes they carry into adult life: these words and pictures not only express ideas, but are part of the educational experience which shapes ideas. (p. 1-2)

The United States Commission of Civil Rights (1980) states that textbooks carry much weight in the schools for a number of reasons. First, they are selected for official use by authorized boards or governments. Second, textbooks are presented to students by figures of authority - their teachers. Third, textbooks are universal. Every student must read them. Books, by many, are believed to express "the whole truth and nothing but the truth." Fourth, children have limited experience upon which to make judgments. They are often susceptible to the influences they encounter in schools. Because textbooks are so vital to the educational experience of students, the responsibility for their high quality is great. And, because so many people accept what is contained in textbooks so uncritically, the responsibilities of textbook critics is even greater.

It is past the point where it can be argued that biased and racist textbooks do not have negative effects on both minority and majority children within the society. They do. Kane (1970) states that many texts portray a white, Anglosaxon, Protestant account of history while, at the same time, neglecting the problems and accomplishments of minority groups. Such ommission, distortions, is biased reporting

> distorts reality for children of both the dominant and oppressed groups. For the most part, white children lack contact with other racial groups - so the portrayal, in textbooks, of other races as

> inferior encourages them to develop a self-concept characterized by feelings of superiority. For children of the dominated group, the textbook portrayals of their group lead toward the development of a negative self-image. To the extent that education fails to expose the mechanisms which maintain the system of privilege for one race and oppression for other races, it serves to perpetuate those inequities. (Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks, p. 39)

Inequity can be perpetuated in education in several ways and can have a variety of effects on children. The United States Commission on Civil Rights (1980) documents four effects. The "latent content" (p.19) of curricular materials has been shown to negatively affect (1) the child's attitudes, (2) the child's personality development, (3) the child's behavior, and (4) the child's academic and occupational achievement. To put it simply, minoirity, "non-white" children suffer when textbooks are biased.

Over and over again, evidence points to the fact that many textbooks are biased and, in a large number of cases, outright racist. Furthermore, biased and racist textbooks have been shown to harm both white children and minority Indian children. Democratic social studies curricula cannot tolerate such harm coming to those students in their charge. As Costo (1970, p. 19) states:

> Everyone has the right to his opinion. A person has also the right to be wrong. But a textbook has no right to be wrong, or to lie, evade the truth, falsify history, or insult or malign a whole race of people.

> The Plains Indians finally vigorously resisted white invasion after having witnessed several centuries of broken promises and violence done to them. Settlers and soldiers were quick to use this resistance as a confirmation that the Indian was indeed fierce, hostile and warlike; ever "lurking" just outside stockades and ever ready to pounce upon defenseless women and children and always accompaniedd by his blood-curdling warwhoop.
>
> When Indians employed scalping, white people were horrified, apparently forgetting that scalping was considered rather virtuous by the English in 1755 when they set bounties on the Penobscot Indian scalps. (p.52)

She goes on to state that

> Most history books have been quick to note that, despite his desperate ferocity, the Indian lost. What these history books often failed to mention was that, not only did the Indian fight in self-defense, and often in revenge, but that there was desperate ferocity on both sides. (p. 53)

Dee Brown's Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee documents some of the savagry perpetrated on Native Americans by governmental military. History should not be whitewashed. But reporting should be balanced. It is just such balanced reporting of history that LaRoque and others suggest is missing from the treatment of history. LaRoque reminds us that there has been a

> selective and ethnocentric viewpoint of civilization that has filtered into every classroom in North America. Hence, the myth of the Indian both as a warrior and as a savage has persisted right into our time. (p. 53)

Many authors critical of textbooks (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1976; Wilson, 1980; Bataille, 1978; etc.) state that texts are written from a white, Eurocentric

perspective. For example, when a textbook author claims that a certain Spanish priest was responsible for building several missions in California, the author is racist, either intentionally or unintentionally, because the author neglected to state that it was, in fact, the sweat and muscles of the California Indians that actually built the churches. Or, when a textbook author debates the relative merits of using Africans vs. Native Americans as slaves, that author is writing from a certain, narrow perspective. Or, that when an author reports that settlers were concerned that Indians would tresspass on "their" settlements, the author has forgotten whose land it was in the first place.

It is easy enough for students to read such excerpts from their textbooks, for example an excerpt about slavery, and come to think that the logical choice for slaves was obviously Black Africans over Native American Indians. When an author discusses how some Indians would not work for Whites or died from exhaustion or exposure, students could <u>logically</u> come to the unconsidered conclusion that Indians must then be lazy or weak. Seldom is it mentioned or even considered that slavery was, at best, a sickening enterprise, made even more ironic because the terrible deaths and indignities were foisted upon a people who were seen as a mission field for White religious men.

Racism is racism; and, it would be as wrong to be biased from one direction to another. Nevertheless, racism has been generally directed against minority people. The history of such biased reporting is widespread, sometimes perpetuated by people who are more concerned with teaching facts than with getting their facts straight. Many current textbooks, the authors of Guidelines for Selecting Bias Free Textbooks and Storybooks suggest, are racist because they promote the superiority of the white race over all others. They state:

> This one-sided, Eurocentric perspective emphasizes the importance of white roots and European backgrounds. It conveys the impression that third world people in the United States lack a cultural heritage, are definable only in terms of their relationship to white people, and are, therefore, inferior to whites. (p. 87)

Often when suggestions are made to counterbalance textbook bias, people are concerned that textbooks will be "censored." But, textbooks may already be censored in their presentations. The "Report of the Task Force on Textbook Evaluation to the Honourable Ben Hanuschak" (1976), written for the Minister of Education in Manitoba, reported the large extent of what they called "errors of ommission, errors of commission, imbalanced presentations, and stereotypes illustrations." Judith Dick (1982) suggests that, when biased presentations are made in textbooks with nothing to counterbalance these presentations, these textbooks can be said to be censored. She notes the

paradox of outcry over censorship when attempts are made to remove some material from the classroom.

The concept of "errors by ommission" has been noted as important by several educators. As mentioned earlier, one of the ways that one might err by ommission is to omit any perspective other than the perspective of the dominant society. The Council on Interracial Books for Children (the authors of Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks,(1979) state that:

> A frequent method of including third world people is by listing their "contributions:" Native Americans gave "us" corn; African Americans gave "us" jazz; and Chinese Americans helped to build "our" railroads. The implication is that thirld world people, and their achievements, are valuable only insofar as they prove useful to "us." (In the case of Native Americans, their development of corn stands a major scientific and agricultural achievement, important to their own societies and having global significance.) Overall, the achievements of women and third world people are minimized. They frequently are isolated in special sections and paragraphs, tangential to the central tale of the "Great White Men" who "forged this nation" and are presumably "us." (p.89)

In the pamphlet "Two History Texts: A Study in Contrasts" (1975), Moore states that judging one culture by the standards of another represents its own type of bias. Furthermore, he claims, many textbooks report information that comes from the first-hand accounts of "white Europeans and Americans, who did not understand what they saw" (p. 4) Hence, Indians are named Indians instead of a name of their own choosing; authors

reports that "funny sounding" place names come from Indians; Indian religious practices are called myths; and the Indians were "discovered" or "found" by Europeans. Moore (1975) criticizes a textbook for stating that:

> The Chickasaws were "by far the most warlike tribe in Mississippi." This is more Eurocentrism. Bettersworth previously stated that knowledge about the Native groups dates from contact with the Europeans. Naturally, the Indians considered Europeans to be invaders, and some fought determinedly for their homelands. Obviously, Europeans considered those who fought them to be "warlike." (p. 4)

LaRoque (1975) criticizes textbooks for their ethnocentricity. She writes:

> When one considers himself superior, he mechanically judges others to be inferior. And just to make sure he is superior, he creates characteristics in others to confirm their inferiority, using his standards as criteria, of course.
>
> Perhaps no clearer example of "judging in advance" can be found than in the use of the term "savage" and all its synonyms. The height of ethnocentricity is to call someone else barbarians... primitive or uncivilized. It is to set oneself up as a measuring stick of civilization. Furthermore, it is to assume that one is exempt from barbarity and savagery. So the explorers, while they were being fed, guided and otherwise aided by the Indians, either killed and tortured them or insulted them in their writings. (p. 50)

The Council on Interracial Books for Children cites the U.S. Civil Rights Commission (1970) as defining racism by stating:

> "Racism is any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of their color." (p. 9)

The Council goes on to state that racism is "no accident." They claim that racism is institutionalized, and it is white. It is white because the institutions controlling the power in the United States are, themselves, white institutions. Racism is not just prejudice in the United States; it is prejudice plus power. They propose that

> those values are not simply individual, not creatures of a series of vacuums, but that they rise from the total society. In any given society, children's books generally reflect the needs of those who dominate that society. A major need is to maintain and fortify the structure of relations between dominators and dominated. The prevailing values are supportive of the existing structure; they are the dominator's values. (p. 7)

Examples of this dominant perspective showing through include the fact that most textbooks name Indian leaders from their "white" names: Sitting Bull rather than Totanka Iotanka and Crazy Horse rather than Tashunka Witko. Inuits are still often called Eskimos a term that means "meat eaters" and is detestible to Inuits. And, Native Americans may be constantly protrayed as bloodthirsty savages preying on innocent women and children, scalping and burning when they are on the warpath. The Council for Interracial Books for Children also states that, although different cultures have different values and priorities,

> the textbooks seriously discuss only those organizations and individuals who want a larger "piece of the pie," that is, reform within the present social and economic system. They scarcely recognize those

> groups who want truly basic change, be it social, political, or economic. (p. 90)

Native Americans are only mentioned when they "conform" to white society. Oppression, the Council for Interracial Books for Children states, it is rarely examined from the perspective of the victims but always seems to be seen as part of a grander, happier history. And, this history is essentially a white, European history. Whether it's true or not, the Council on Interracial Books for Children states that

> The Trails of Tears of the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Creek nations were not aberrations, but elements of systematic and continuous national policy that led to the extermination of millions...
>
> By failing to compare the experiences of different peoples (e.g., reservations for Native Americans, concentration camps for Japanese), the evolution of recurrent, basic themes is lost. (p. 91)

Stereotype by Attribution

Are Polish people stupid? Do people from Ireland drink too much? Would a man from Scotland dig up his front lawn with an earthmover to find a dime because he is so cheap? Do all Jewish mothers make chicken soup for sick relatives? Obviously, the answers to these questions are No! And, despite the fact that such stereotypes are attributed to these groups through the "humour" of ethnic jokes, only the foolish and naive would believe that such qualities actually exemplify the

characters mentioned above.

However, a textbook is not an ethnic joke. And when certain groups of people are stereotyoed in negative ways in textbooks, the results are hardly humorous. Flashback Canada, whether maliciously or accidently, implies that Indians are stupid, irresponsible, or liars and cheaters.

Consider these two short paragraphs on pages 193 and 194.

> The next afternoon the Indians fight a make-believe battle on horseback for the visitors. They fire their rifles in all directions and send bullets whistling past the heads of the spectators. It is a spectacular display of horsemanship and shooting skills.
>
> Three days are spent in paying the treaty money to the various tribes. The Indians are paid by members of the North-West Mounted Police. It is hard work to find out the correct number in each family. Many Indians, after receiving their money, come back to say they made a wrong count. They have discovered another wife, a few more children, a blind mother or lame sisters.

How can one understand the "bullets whistling past the heads of spectators?" Possibly the Indians are rotten shots. Yet, the next sentence states clearly that the Indians were skillful at shooting. The only logical understanding, then, is that the Indians were either stupid and dangerous - only an idiot would endanger another person's life; or, they were irresponsible and dangerous - they knew what they were doing and were acting in some sophomoric manner. In either case, they endangered the lives of the visitors.

The next short paragraph states that the Indians are either stupid or liars and cheats. How can one not remember if he has a wife? or the number of children he has fathered? or his blind mother? or his lame sister? There are only three choices for understanding such actions; none of them are positive. First, Indian men may just be ignorant. They may actually not remember if they have two wives, or three, or even four. They may even have children they know nothing about; or, they may have forgotten their blind mothers. Second, we can understand this behavior as un "Western" or as un "Christian". Would a "god-fearing" white man have several wives or choose to forget his mother, especially if she were blind? Are these Indian men to be seen as Casanovas, irresponsibly fathering children for whom they take little care, until it comes time to collect the "welfare" cheque? The third possible explanation is that the Indians are cheats. When they realized they could get more money by fictionalizing family members, they made up sob stories of blind mothers and lame sisters. Interestingly, even in this cheating they are shown to be stupid. It is only <u>after</u> they first receive some money are they able to figure out that more family means more money. They couldn't even get their story straight before the first trip.

Even the style of these stereotyped attributions is problematic. Although the account is fictionalized, probably

to add interest, it is written as though it were first-hand reporting which makes the attributions even more believable.

Decore (p. 15) defines errors of attribution as "failure (s) to adequately distinguish various tribes and/or native groups." In other words, because of the manner in which textbooks are written, the reader--especially when unfamiliar with the Native group being written about--will come to believe that all Native groups are the same in lifestyle, political and social institutions, and in belief systems. Such attributions are historically inaccurate. Implying that all Native people dress, live, and believe alike depersonalizes the groups and trivializes their important distinctions.

Decore (p. 15) cites Lewis (1980, p. 7) as stating:

> "The first governments in Canada were those belonging to the native peoples. Members of a tribe would gather together to decide on matters of war or of the hunt. In these meetings chiefs were elected to lead the tribes for short periods of time..."

Decore states (p. 15):

> "Besides the fact that it is inappropriate to call this form of political organization a government, it is also a form of organization that was characteristic of no known tribe."

A second type of error of attribution can occur through the repetition of insignificant or uncommon practices to the point of myth-making. For example, should a textbook redundantly show pictures of Native people without clothes or

in warpaint, the reader is left with the implication that Native people are primitive and/or warlike. Emma LaRoque (1975, p. 53) points out that the "myth of the Indian both as a warrior and a savage has persisted right into our century."

Decore (p. 21-22) reports that numerous accounts of the dietary "exotica" of Natives gives the impression that such practices are of "central cultural significance." Dwelling on such "exotica" attributes a stigma of "different" or "wierd" to Native people.

PROBLEMS OF CONTEXT

Problems of context can fall into, essentially, three categories. These include:

1. Lack of Context
2. Out of Context and
3. From an Ethnocentric Context

For example, Decore (p. 16) reports that Bakken (1980, p. 31) in Albertans All states that "some native people have not been able to adapt to modern society." The problem with this statement is lack of context. The context lacking is that modern society is capitalistic and dominated by a white, liberal (using the classic definition) majority. Besides the difficulties faced by any minority, non-dominate group in gaining political and economic power, which is true in any

society, the liberal ethics is based on a value of control and manipulation of the environment. Such a value system is fundamentally opposed to the more harmonius interaction with the environment that many Native cultures had adopted through their histories. Not only did Native people suffer because they were perceived as a racial minority in a white dominant society, they also held at least some fundamental values in opposition to those whose values dominated the belief systems of that society.

Decore (p. 16) also states that not being able to adapt to modern society is hardly ethnic-group specific. But, the elementary student will come to believe that Natives are "stone age" and unable through some fault of their own to adapt to any technological change.

Lack of context can also be seen by the lack of reporting the fact that it was the white European, and not the Indian, who first introduced the practice of scalping victims to get a "head-count" of dead Indians.

The problem of out of context can be illustrated by the fact that the history of Native people is often judged through 1983 eyes. White torture ought to be repulsive to all people, torture was, more or less, common to all groups of people in the 18th century. Historical reports that show only the torture of the white settler by the Indians neglect the history

of that period of time.

Some historians have also suggested that the movement of Native people to reservations must also be understood within the same context as the internment of Canadians of Japanese ancestry during World War II. If such an action was not "racially" motivated they suggest, how is it that Canadians of Italian or German ancestry were not interned?

The third problem of context has to do with the way that textbooks reflect the context and perspective of those writing and publishing the textbooks. For example, Decore (p. 16) cites The Canadian Scrapbooks Series: "A Nation Launched" (p. 2) as stating that the suppression of the Riel Rebellion of 1870 was one of MacDonald's "achievements." The definition of the word achievement implies that something good only for the white, European in Canada and not the Metis.

Decore also reports that Andy Russel in "What is Grizzly Country?" (Who Owns the Earth, Western Canadian Literature for Youth, p. 81) states that the "...old Plains Indians worshipped the sun..." However, as Decore (p. 17) reports "no Indian elder, spiritual leader, would say 'worship' in connection with the sun." In this case, a western notion of worship is transposed, unacceptably, to explain a phenomena of the Plains Indians. The result, Decore reports, is incorrect.

Decore reports (p. 122) that Fryer (1977, p. 105) in

Alberta: The Pioneer Years states:

> "In exchange for reservations, money, farm machinery, medical care, schooling--in fact, what one writer called more succintly 'permanent welfare'--their chiefs signed away a huge chunk of their land."

Such a statement is written from an ethnocentric perspective and context and implies that as a result of this treaty the Indians had now become a burden to white government who must now "shell out" for unending welfare. It also implies that the Indians, in general, and their chiefs, in particular, were lazy, stupid, and corrupt--willingly accepting the status of welfare recipient.

> Racism oppresses and exploits everyone, the Council suggests, because it dehumanizes its advocates. These advocates may be blind to their own dehumanization. The Council also suggests that there are white people who must be included among the dominated people in North American society. There are people who would choose not to be racist, yet are "kept in line" by an overwhelming racist force telling them to enjoy their superior position because at least they are white and to refrain from joining in common concerns with others who are not white. Non-whites are just not their kind of people.

Gabriel Marcel, in his book Man Against Mass Society (1952), explains the psychological nature of racism by stating that:

> As soon as anyone claims of me that I must commit myself to a warlike action against other human beings, whom I must as a consequence of my committment be ready to destroy, it is very necessary from the point of view of those who are influencing me that I lost all awareness of the individual reality of the being whom I may be led to destroy. In order to transform him into a mere impersonal target, it is absolutely necessary to

> convert him into an abstraction: the Communist, the anit-facist, the facist, and so on. (p. 157-158)

So What? What does it matter if textbooks are biased?

Evidence suggests that biased textbooks can be damaging. But, just how damaging can they be? Although some people, including teachers, choose to ignore the impact of textbooks, Britton and Lumpkin (1977, p. 1) call the effects of stereotyping in textbooks and school reading material "mind-numbing." They state:

> In the course of analyzing sexism in texts, we became aware of two additional prejudices:
>
> 1) there is such a thing as racist sexism
>
> 2) racism itself is rampant in the reading material used in American classrooms.

Textbooks are so important to the education of children that they must be carefully scrutinized. Black (1967) estimated that 75 percent of a child's schoolwork and 90 perent of that child's homework concentrates on the textbook. The NCSS Bulletin titled Racism and Sexism concludes that educators should be concerned with whether textbooks are written in ways that correct the distortions and invisibility of minorities. Michaelis (1976) states that textbooks not only are written to teach knowledge but also are used to transmit values and attitudes.

Britton and Lumpkin (1977, p. 5) cite a statement by

Matina S. Horner in the preface to the Macmillan Publishing Company's "Guidelines for Creating Positive Sexual and Racial Images in Educational Materials" (1975) as capturing the essense of the issue. They state:

> From the books we read, the stories we hear, and the "models" we observe, we develop an awareness of expected categorical distinctions within our society. Gradually, by a process of continual reinforcement, we adopt existing cultural norms in such a way that they become capable of exerting subtle psychological pressures on us. The exercise of these norms as internalized criteria against which we then judge the aspirations, feelings, and behavior of ourselves and others tends to perpetuate the existing categorical distinction.

As a consequence of the books that people read, many otherwise motivated and capable individuals are constrained from rising any higher than they already are. Books can, many critics conclude, form a sort of culture of defeatism that hangs like an albatross around the necks of the abused. On the other hand, books can represent a shining symbol of hope for those lucky enough to be in the dominant group. In such cases, books can be models that encourage the privileged with dreams of aspiration where they can see visions of what they are capable of becoming. One of the reasons why minorities might not rise to greater status in white, North American society is that their dreams have become crushed.

The United States Commission on Civil Rights (1980) reports that

> Textbooks play an essentially important role in a child's life as the society's officially prescribed and endorsed transmitters of knowledge. When stereotypes and omissions of minorities and females occur in the curriculum, children's understanding of themselves and the world around them has been shown to be detrimentally affected.
>
> Studies report that children's attitudes toward other persons' race, ethnicity, gender, social class, or age may be influenced by the "latent content" of textbooks. The longer a child uses a textbook, the greater its potential influence. (p. 19)

Edward Hall, author of The Silent Language, states that books have the potential to perpetuate negative self-images. Because this is true, books should carry the warning (Reported in Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks, p. 27): "This book may be dangerous; read with caution." If books are not dangerous enough in themselves, when placed in the hands of a teacher who has not thought out the implications, they can be downright dangerous to the feelings of minority children. Emma LaRoque passionately describes her school experiences at the hands of a teacher and textbook she admits as trying to "help" her. She writes:

> Other school pictures also played with my mind. I saw Dick, Jane and Sally's suburban home and their grandparent's expansive and, oh, so clean farm. Not for a long time was I to appreciate my home again.
>
> The point is, I had been perfectly content to sleep on the floor, eat rabbit stew and read and play cards by kerosene lamp until my perceptions were swayed at school. Neither had I suffered spiritual want. I had been spellbound by my mother's ability to narrate Cree legends and enriched by my father's dreams, until the teacher outlawed Cree and made fun of dreams.

> From then on I existed in poverty; not with reference to our log cabin, our food an our small wood-stove as compared to the brick schoolhouse, its food and its huge, coal-burning pot-belly stove, but because I was persuaded by my teacher's propaganda and the pictures. The teacher's authoritarianism, coupled with his failure to reinforce whatever world we came from, effectively our respect for our parents. (p. 68)

Certainly, the material found in the book was not evil in itself. It described a perfectly natural cultural and social experience for a large number of people. But, to represent this one, unique cultural experience as the one of value or, by implication, the only one of worth, is damaging. LaRoque recalls her personal suffering very passionately. However, hers is not the only negative experience. Poussaint's (1970) research reports that the "pattern of teaching white supremacy" (p. 10) in social studies contributed to insecurity and racial inferiority in minority students. Characters in Textbooks (1980) cites a Mexican-American student as saying:

> I remember phrases from my history book like, "Santa Anna knew that we was dealing with a superior class of men." It is phrases like that, that stay in the mind, that stay on the surface, but they keep drilling this junk in your heads until it gets to your subconcious... what am I--inferior or something? (p. 16)

The Council for Interrracial Books for Children (1979) defines a racist textbook as one that makes minority children feel that everything about them, including themselves, their language, their view-points, and their culture, are inferior.

A racist textbooks also is one that helps make white children feel that they are superior.

Many examples that textbooks are, in fact, biased have been pointed out. Judith Dick (1982) cites an article from the Victoria Times (June 14, 1972, p. 7) that reports that the British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians urged removal of the story "The Long Arm of the Law" from the curriculum of British Columbia. The education director of the association suggests:

> Who knows how many thousands of kids' minds have been poisoned by this type of thing? Our men are not bucks and braves and our women are not squaws. We do not say 'heap big Indian' and things like that.

LaRoque (1975, p. 58) suggests that Indian children do not do well in school not because their culture is inferior but because it is different than the culture propogated in schools. She blames the 90 percent dropout rate of Native children on the fact that their background is not middle class. School is just not designed for Indian culture or Indian children. School is for white kids, and the message to native children is silent, but sure. Change, or fail!

The US Commission on Civil Rights (1980) states that

> At the same time that a pupil is learning social studies, mathematics, and reading, textbooks are influencing the child's self-esteem, values, aspirations, and fears. The degree to which textbooks influence a child's sense of self-worth is largely determined by the extent to which that child identifies with the characters and situations and becomes

emotionally involved with them. (p. 16)

The Commission (1980) also quotes Poussaint (1970, p. 11) as stating:

> Frequently, such internal feelings may lead to an overwhelming discomfort which then results in a student's withdrawal and truancy. Other youngsters may develop an attitude of "what's the use" or feel that they don't have a "right" to success. Still others adopt an attitude of hostility and defiance against a system that appears to despise them. (p. 16)

Yet, despite the generally negative tone about textbooks, studies have shown that textbooks that promote unbiased, non-racist reporting of minority groups have a positive effect on both minority and majority students. An early study by Smith (1948) reports positive attitide changes in children after reading books on minorities. Litcher and Johnson (1969) report that multi-ethnic readers helped students develop more positive attitudes towards black Americans. Fisher (1965) reported that discussion and reading about American Indians resulted in positive change in grade five students.

Given the positive research results of attention to minorities in textbooks and basal reading series, as well as the fact that democratic educational institutions proport to assure equality of opportunity, it seems reasonable to develop textual materials that reflect high, democratic standards of publishing. James Banks (1969) states:

> Since democracy grants every individual the right to explore, examine and reach his own conclusion

> through reflection and discussion, (denying students) opportunities to reflect on racial problems is to refute the very tenets of democracy. (p. 172)

Britton and Lumpkin (1977) state that

> All children deserve to see themselves portrayed as fully functioning human beings ... No child's life and aspirations should be limited by the subliminal bias that pervades his own public school textbooks.

These critics of biased textbooks add that, until things change for the better, another generation of school children will learn that some people in society are more valuable than others. LaRoque (1975) echoes Britton and Lumpkin's admonition. She states that the treatment of Natives in textbooks and in education generally reflects that the society has low expectations, as a group, for Natives and fails to see them as individuals. She adds: "It is not trusting them to be competent on their own." (p. 65)

The Council for Interracial Books for Children (p. 13) states that examples of racist textbooks cited by critics are all too frequent. They write:

> Centuries of racism have left an ethnocentric majority with little knowledge or understanding of other peoples. No matter how good the intent of white authors and artists, they have rarely done a satisfactory job of depicting thirld world people in children's books.
>
> And it is the final product that counts--not the intent. We must be concerned above all with the effects of a book on the children who read it. What happens to children from the racial group depicted when they look in that mirror and see sameness, ugliness, dependency on whites, lack of resistance, acceptance

> only on the basis of an endless willingness to suffer? What happens when they see something they can never have - whiteness - embodied with superiority and desirability? What happens when they see a pretty world free of racism, which they know to be unreal? What happens when they see their own people always "in trouble with the law"? What happens when they see their culture and language reduced to quaintesss, at best, and more often to inferiority?
>
> There is a similar list of questions for white children, and it also points to a pattern of harmful effects. What happens when white children look in that mirror and see only themselves, although the world itself is not thus? What happens when they see racism go uncondemned? What happens when they see minority people incapable of doing for themselves, desiring only to be accepted by persons unlike themselves? Does this prepare white children for reality? Does it enrich their lives and minds? Does it inspire the best human values, anger against injustice, a desire to unite with others in order to make this a healthy society? Or does it help breed another generation of white chauvinists? (p. 13)

Some critics suggest that even long-standing concepts in the social studies must be reconsidered or reviewed. For example, the NCSS Bulletin Racism and Sexism makes the acceptance of cultural pluralism problematic. The Bulletin states that, given the present situation,

> the following questions seem appropriate. Have we accepted pluralism's premise? To what extent have we designed programs to help students recognize, accept, and value the diversity which is so richly abundant in our nation? Have such courses fairly presented the contributions of women to society and actively worked to correct sex-role stereotypes? To what extent have we taught our students to search for historical truths? What have we done to assist them in developing effective skills in intergroup relations? How well have social studies textbooks done in eliminating bias based on race and sex? How have we helped students avoid a narrow, egocentric view of the world and the "way it's spozed to be?"

Can quality educational publishing help promote a more democratic and pluralistic society? Despite their passionate criticism, the Council on Interracial Books for Children believes that good educational materials can help promote a better society. They state:

> We propose that children's literature become a means for the conscious promotion of human values that will help lead to greater human liberation. We are advocates of a society which will be free of racism, sexism, ageism, materialism, elitism, handicapism and a host of other negative values. We are advocates of a society in which all human beings have the true, not rhetorical, opportunity to realize their full human potential. We therefore frankly advocate books that will help achieve such a society and help prepare children for such a society. (p. 9)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Association of American Publishers, "Statement on Bias-Free Materials." (New York: Committee on Social Issues of the A. A. P. School Division, September 1976).

Atnikov, Pamela; Irma Olesen and Glen McRuer. A Study of Social Studies Textbooks Approved for use in Manitoba. Human Rights Commission, 1971.

Banks, James A.; "The Need for Positive Racial Attitudes in Textbooks," in Racial Crisis in American Education, ed. Robert L. Green (Chicago: Follett Educational Corp., 1969), p. 172.

Hillel Black, The American School Book (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1976), p. 3.

Poritton, Guyneth; and Margaret Lumpkin, A Consumer's Guide to Sex, Race and Career Bias In Public School Textbooks, Britton and Associates, Corvallis, Oregon, 1977.

Brown Dee; Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee, (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), p. 89.

Byler, Mary Glyne; American Indian Authors for Young Readers, (New York: The Association of American Indian Affairs, 1973). p. 8.

Costo Rupert; and Jeanette Henry, eds. Textbooks and the American Indian. (San Francisco: Indian Historical Press, Inc., 1970).

Council on Interracial Books for Children, Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks. (New York: Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc., 1979).

Decore, A. M,; et. al., Native People in the Curriculum. (Edmonton: Alberta Department of Education, 1981).

Dick Judith; Not in our Schools?!!!. (Ottawa: The Canadian Librarian Association, 1982).

Fisher, Frank L.; "The Influence of Reading and Discussion on the Attitudes of Fifth Graders Toward American Indians" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1973) pp. 56-7.

Bribskov, Margaret Elise; "A Critical Analysis of Textbook Accounts of the Role of Indians in American History" (Ph.D. dissertations, University of Oregon, 1973). pp. 56-7.

"Guidelines for Creating Positive Sexual and Racial Images in Educational Materials," (New York: Macmillian Publishing Company, 1975).

Hall, Edward; The Silent Language,

"Indians also slam reader.", Victoria Times, June 14, 1972, p. 7.

Kane, Michael B.; Minorities in Textbooks. (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1970).

Kirkness, Verna J.; "Prejudice About Indians in Textbooks," Journal of Reading, (April, 1977).

LaRoque, Emma; Defeathering the Indian. (Agincourt: The Book Society of Canada Limited, 1975).

Litcher, John; and David Johnson, "Changes in Attitudes Toward Negroes of White Elementary School Students After Use of Multiethnic Readers," Journal of Educational Psychology, vol. 60 (April 1969), pp. 148 - 52.

Marcel, Gabriel; Man Against Mass Society. (Gateway, 1952), pp. 157-158.

McDiarmid, Garnet; and David Pratt, Teaching Prejudice. (Toronto: OISE, 1971).

Michaelia, John U.; Social Studies for Children in a Democracy: Recent Trends and Developments. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall 1976). p. 5.

Moore, Robert B.; and Arlene Hirschfielder, "Feathers, Tomahawks and Tipis: A Study of Stereotyped 'Indian' Imagery in Children's Picture Books," Unlearning 'Indian' Sterotypes. (New York: Council on

Interracial Books for Children, 1977). p. 15.

Shaver, James P.; O. L. Davis, and Suzanne W. Helburn, "The Status of Social Studies Education:: Impressions from Three NSF Studies," Social Education (February, 1979).

The Shocking Truth About Indians in Textbooks. Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1977.

Smith, Nila Banton, "Some Effects of Reading on Children," Elementary English, vol. 25 (May 1948), pp. 271-78.

Swanson, Charles H.; "The Treatment of the American Indian in High School History Texts," The Indian Historian. (n.d.), p. 35.

United States Commission on Civil Rights, Characters in Textbooks: A Review of the Literature. (Washington: Clearinghouse Publication 62, May 1980).

U.S., Commission on Civil Rights, "What Students Perceive", introducation by Alvin Poussaint, M.D. (Washington, D.C.: Clearinghouse Publication no.24, 1970).